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Dear Charles,

I've just seen something I'd forgotten I have. I write you about it to learn whether you'll want to keep it. If you do, you'll want this explanation.

It is probable, I think, that the entire history of the JFK assassination as we know it was controlled by the instant and permeating publisher refusal to consider any book not in accord with the official mythology. As I encapsulate at the beginning of Whitewash, before publishing it myself, I collected more than 100 rejections internationally - without a single adverse editorial comment. A major British publisher did decide to publish it subject to the approval of a don they had read manuscripts. He nixed it and I later learned he was an adjunct of British intelligence. Then another British publisher was writing a contract for it when he was fed bad information, that it would have competition from another book, Mark Lane's, to be published by a larger house. My file on the nonpublishing history of the first book by far on the Warren Commission - it was completed mid-February, 1965 - holds his correspondence. His name is Frewin. In Germany Fischer A.G., a major publisher, decided to publish it as soon as one of its people read the manuscript, delivered by a mutual friend. I never received its letters offering me a deal or the manuscript when having had no response it was mailed back to me. (That was when, according to the Church committee, the FBI was intercepting foreign mail for the CIA.) My decision to self-publish was precipitated by Norton's asking me to reorganize the book into what would have meant I was charging our government with a conspiracy that could not be proven. I had prepared to self-publish nine months earlier when there were clear indications that the book was about to be stolen in France. (The French government provided me with counsel and that then did not happen.) After this experience with Norton it was not difficult to publish the book myself except that the printer broke the agreement with the presses ready to roll when he was scared by his lawyer. I see this explanation is taking longer than I expected. I may have to return to it later. I'm awaiting transportation to Johns Hopkins for one of my regular consultations there. A conservative British correspondent friend who knows of some of the efforts I'd made in the United States made the suggestion when I was not able to think clearly that got me a printer who not only printed the book but extended me credit. The correspondent was the late Steve Barber of the conservative Express papers. When I got to his office he had the home and office phones for me of the most reactionary U.S. newspaper publisher, Bill Loeb of the Manchester Union-Leader. He and his wife had read the ms and liked it much and if his secretary had not goofed Regnery would have published the book here. Loeb introduced me to Merkle Press in Washington and it printed the book for me, refusing to take a mortgage on our property to assure it would not lose anything. After I made a success of the book, and how I did is another story, Dell, which had

twice rejected the book and then a third time through its Dial subsidiary, came to me wanting to reprint it. A ^{reporter} friend on the Baltimore Sun, whose father was a magazine publisher, went to Dell to ask it to distribute the book if they became the publisher. Instead Dell said it wanted to publish the book. So this reporter acted, if I may use that word, as my agent. He in fact did nothing than an agent does and as soon as he got the advance ^{and} his ~~hit~~ out he left the country.

The contract, which I had to negotiate, called for an initial 250,000-copy first print. The advance was \$10,000. I was also required to make another printing of my edition for Dell to distribute to promote the book. That took almost all my part of the advance and then Dell did nothing to promote the book so that was a total loss. I never got paid for my actual cost in the special printing and had to pay time and a half and double time to have it delivered to Dell over a weekend!

Dell did nothing to promote the book but it became Dell's only best-selling work of nonfiction for six months or more. After rejecting my second book, first refusal being a provision of the contract, when the first one did so well it decided to publish it, meaning reprint it, too. That killed the sale of my edition and again I got only the advance. When I was asked to be the main speaker at the Union Associated Press editor's 1967 convention, Dell agreed to pay my expenses and to provide copies of both books for me to give out at that convention.

When I ultimately got Dell's accounting on the first book, which was about a year after the contract, I discovered that it had made three printings, the second two when it claimed to have half of the first 250,000 printing on hand. That, of course, made no sense at all, reprinting twice with 125,000 copies on hand. And then, by accident, I noticed that one of the books I had not given away at the AP editor's convention was a fourth printing! Which makes it even more apparent that Dell gypped the hell out of me. This was made easier by my lack of an agent and by Dell's owning the printing plant that printed its books.

What I just saw that reminded me of this history is a copy of that fourth printing.

I have the accountings on file somewhere, too. *No fourth printing in them.*

Through a friend I got a New York lawyer who was going to handle this case against Dell but he then got himself in some kind of trouble and just disappeared.

All the earlier books critical of the Warren Report had trouble getting printed save one, Epstein's Inquest- and it made the FBI heroic in condemning Warren et al. Sylvia Meagher's great book was a sort of exception but that was really a fluke. A Bobbs, Merrill New York editor, a fine guy who died ^{young} earlier, had fought without success to get them to publish Whitewash. With the success I made of "Whitewash and Lane's with the promotions Holt, Reinhart arranged, he had little trouble persuading Bobbs, Merrill to publish Meagher's but they really did nothing with it, hope it would carry itself.

Ride here. I have a file on my efforts to get Whitewash published because I once

planned a second book titled "Dick Daring in the Hellbox, or How I got Rich in Six Months."

Resumed 11/20. I should explain the planned title. In newspaper composing rooms, where I spent much time when I was young, all the discarded type was thrown into a box to be melted and reused. The heat required to melt the metal was great, thus the name "hell box."

I began with a contract that required me to deliver the ms. by 2/15/65, almost impossible but I did it. While that since-defunct publisher was drooling into the till over an unadvertised advance sale of 39,000, quite good for those days, he suddenly broke the contract, without explanation. Because I wanted to be sure there was nothing in the manuscript to account for this strange behavior, I asked Ernie Berger, who then had the only book store in Frederick and was a dear friend, if he knew an editor I could get to ~~the~~ read the ms. His cousin, Sylvia Weinberg, was an editor. She read it and after reading it told me she'd not touched it because no two publishers would agree on any changes and it was OK as it was. She thought it a fine book, with excellent prospects. She said it should make me a rich man in six months.

Hence the planned title.

I think Sylvia was Al Weinberg's cousin.

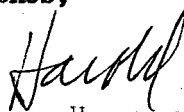
If Simon and Schuster or Pocket Books had not printed a fraudulent book, Calories Don't Count, she would have been right, too. Whitewash got raves at Pocket Books all the way up to Shimkin, when then owned that house. He and the others there were more than just honest with me—they tried to get the book published for me!

Shimkin said that if he published it, it would be "a red flag before the charging bull" of the Department of Justice. It then had six people indicted for that fraudulent book and Shimkin did not want to be the seventh.

In my presence they asked Doubleday to do the book. Doubleday was also honest, telling me their decision not to publish it "was not editorial and not easy to arrive at."

and that, thereafter, was its history.

Best wishes,



Harold Weisberg